

## Wax Off by flippyspoon

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**Summary:**

Billy is late to dates all the time. He has his reasons.

## Wax Off

“Shit.”

Billy bounced on his toes and squeezed his eyes shut.

He had a date with Steve. He was on his way to Steve's house but he'd pulled over into the woods about a mile from Loch Nora because his hands were shaking and his heart was pounding.

It wasn't a “panic thing.” Steve said he sometimes got “panic things.” It wasn't that. At first Billy thought it was except that he hadn't felt exactly panicked other times when it had happened. He'd felt...happy and giddy and also nervous and also other emotions that didn't quite have names. Now he was pacing on the side of the road, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, as he rubbed his hands and shook them out again.

“Get it together,” he mumbled around his smoke. “Fuck.”

This kept happening on the way to see Steve and he couldn't stand to see Steve when he felt like this except that Steve himself seemed to be the cause. He had to calm himself down every time, which could take a while. He kept running very late for dates or for desperate bouts of sex in Steve's room. It kept pissing Steve off too but Billy countered with charm and okay, he also acted like Steve was being kind of a pussy for caring Billy was late. A very weak voice in his head told him that was a dick move. He didn't know what else to do.

“Fuck shit fuck,” Billy muttered. All he could think about was how cute Steve had been in English class that day. Billy had actually been paying attention because English was his favorite class but Steve had no patience for it at all. He kept doodling little cartoons of an angry little Billy increasingly surrounded by hearts and then crumbling them up and tossing them over to Billy's desk.

It was so goddamn cheesy but it made Billy have to cover his mouth with his fist, twisting his hand around, trying to swallow his smile. Plus Steve was wearing this sky blue shirt with the sleeves rolled up. He looked so pretty in blue and the sleeves were cuffed tight around

his biceps. Billy had wanted to bite them.

Now his heart was pounding. He was *nervous*.

"This is so stupid," Billy said, stomping on his cigarette. "Dammit."

He ended up arriving horribly late but he was *calm*, that was the important thing. If he let Steve see him all rattled and fucked up, he'd say something stupid, he was sure of it. He'd act like a completely love-struck doofus. He couldn't have that. Billy Hargrove was not a goddamn doofus.

He checked his hair in the window next to Steve's front door and knocked.

And waited.

And knocked.

"Ugh. Goddammit-"

The door opened in a rush of cool air and Steve was standing there...glaring.

"Oh," Steve said in a monotone, eyes narrowed. "Look who showed up."

"Hey." Billy smiled, all charm. Steve was still wearing that shirt and he'd fixed his hair up fresh for the evening. He looked gorgeous but Billy felt cool now and he leaned in the door and bit his lip, eying Steve up and down. "How's it going, babe?"

"What do you care?" Steve bit out. "It's almost eight and you were supposed to be here at fucking *six-thirty*."

"Yeah, I know but Christ, Steve-"

"We made a date for *six-thirty*," Steve said. "I know, because I said it about ten times-"

"Babe, c'mon-"

“You know what, go fuck yourself!” Steve’s eyes were big. He was glaring at Billy. He suddenly seemed a little taller. “You’re so late *all* the time like you can’t even be bothered!”

“That’s not-”

“You think I’m some desperate pathetic loser!” Steve shouted. “Like I’m just gonna wait around for you!”

“No...I-”

“Just because I don’t rule the school and all that bullshit! I can get a date any time I want to! I don’t need to wait around for your dick, okay!”

“Hey!” Billy whipped around, just to make sure nobody was watching them.

“Just go home!” Steve said. “I really don’t care anymore!”

“Steve!”

“GO HOME!”

The door slammed in his face, so hard that it rattled the windows and blew Billy’s hair back. Billy was suddenly out of breath. All of his blood felt as if it had just rushed out of his body. He pounded on the door with his fists.

“YEAH, WELL FUCK YOU, HARRINGTON!” Billy screamed. “YOU THINK I NEED YOU! I DON’T NEED YOUR ASS! FUCK YOU!”

They had planned to stay in at Steve’s. They were going to order pizza and swim and Billy was supposed to watch Steve ease into his pool in those little Calvins that hugged his ass just right and they were supposed to make love and just the idea that Billy referred to it as “making love” even in his own head was something he tried not to dwell on and now...

“Shit,” Billy said. His voice sounded too high. There were tears sliding down his face. “Shit...shit...”

He felt like breaking every window in Steve's house and he also felt like crumbling to the ground and dying on Steve's stoop. Instead he stumbled back to his car and got in and sat there, staring and crying.

He shut his eyes, gripping his steering wheel.

"Fuck...fuck...goddammit..."

He burst into tears. He grit his teeth and sobbed and pounded his dashboard with his fists until he felt weak and slumped over, sniffing.

*What a little bitch*, he thought.

Steve Harrington had turned him bitch.

Didn't that just figure.

He sat there for a long time. His head hurt. He didn't know what time it was when there was a tapping on his window. Billy sniffed and rolled down the window even while some part of him screamed that he absolutely did not want Steve to see him this way. But he couldn't quite think straight.

"I told you to go home, asshole. What're you still doing in my..." Steve stopped when Billy turned his head to look at him. He probably looked awful, all sniffly and gross and definitely the desperate and pathetic loser in the equation.

Billy didn't speak. He dug his keys out of his pocket, a flight response taking over. He had to get *out* of there before Steve screamed at him again, before he felt even worse, before he put his own fist through his own goddamn car window-

"Hey, whoa whoa!" Steve reached through the window and grabbed Billy's wrist. "Are you alright?"

"Lemme alone," Billy mumbled, his voice thick.

"You're *shaking*."

Billy only shrugged weakly. He was trying to stuff his key in the

ignition but he couldn't get it, he kept fumbling...

"Hold on, hold on... Just wait..." Steve ran around the car and got in the passenger side. He was staring at Billy who wiped his nose on his sleeve and dug his wrists into his eyes. "I really...didn't expect you to like...cry."

This was so humiliating Billy thought he might skip high school graduation and just take off to California. As soon as he could get Steve out of his car. Yes, good idea. Well, okay, he'd stop home first and grab his stuff.

*Got to get out of here.*

"Get out of the car," Billy said darkly. "And I'll go. Just fuck off."

There was no bite to his words at all. Steve had taken everything without even meaning to.

How would he *live* now?

"Why are you so..." Steve's voice was so soft and sweet sounding. Billy had to close his eyes again. He couldn't look at him. "Why are you all shaking and crying, man? You act like you don't even..."

"Get the fuck out of the..." He couldn't finish his sentence. He slumped against his steering wheel. He was so tired suddenly. "I mean why do you *think* I'm... Jesus..."

"Is it...cause of your dad?" Steve said, sounding careful. "That you're late a lot? Because if it's that-"

"No," Billy said.

"I just..." He heard Steve sigh. "When you're so late all the time it's like you don't care and you act like *I'm* a pussy for being pissed or for being hurt or whatever but now you're all... Do you have a *reason*?"

Billy shrugged.

"Are you with someone else?" Steve said it with what Billy thought was as weird kind of finality. Like he was sure that was it. Dumbass.

"No," Billy said.

"Well?"

Billy looked at him. Steve's eyebrows were raised. He pursed his lips. He was trying to look determined but there was still some pity in his expression.

"It's..." Billy clenched his jaw. "It's...embarrassing. Ok?"

Steve was quiet for a minute and then he said, "Last week I farted on your fingers and you laughed so hard you fell off the bed. It can't be more embarrassing than that. Like seriously." He was smiling now and Billy chuckled in surprise and sniffed, sitting back in his seat. His eyes were sore from crying.

"I get..." Billy thought he would choke on the words. "I get all like...riled up? When I'm coming to see you."

"Riled up," Steve said. "What, like turned on?"

"No. I mean yeah, partly. Just..." He rubbed his forehead. Oh, this was *awful*. "I get...nervous." He mumbled. He hoped Steve wouldn't understand him and wouldn't ask what he'd said and also just let it go.

"Nervous?" Steve said.

*Shit.*

"My heart goes nuts!" Billy spit out, pounding his chest. "Alright! Like my hands shake and I get fuckin'...lightheaded! I can't even stop smiling... I smile and I don't even know I'm fucking smiling, Steve! It's *bullshit*! I can't even control it! I have to calm myself down 'cause I just get so... Every time I'm gonna see you. Alright? Sometimes at school I gotta go to the can just to like...fucking get control of myself because you were being all..." He waved a hand in Steve's general direction. "Like you are. I turn into a complete dope!"

Great. There it was. All out. He crossed his arms. His cheeks felt so hot he was sure Steve could tell. But Steve only looked baffled. He was wearing the same expression he usually wore in English.

“Let me get this straight,” Steve said. “*You*, Billy Hargrove, Mr. Cool Guy Badass King of the School and shit... You turn into some dizzy blithering idiot or whatever? Just because you’re like...so madly in love with me? So you have to go...calm down and meditate or whatever? Or you’ll, I dunno, embarrass yourself? Because you’re sooooo in love with me you can’t handle your shit?”

Billy turned his head and stared out the windshield at the front of Steve’s house. His heart was pounding like crazy again, just the way it had been on the side of the road. From somewhere in the depths of his throat he managed a very small: “Yes.”

Steve was quiet for so long that Billy thought that karma had somehow really caught up with him. For the fight at the Byers. For everything. He’d turned bitch for Steve and now he’d just humiliated himself and it still wasn’t enough and...

He looked over at Steve who was looking down at his hands. He was smiling lopsidedly. He bit his lip and then his funny little smile split into a huge grin. He tipped his head and snuck a look at Billy. “Really?” He said softly.

Billy chewed on his lips and then said, “Why do you think I take so long in the bathroom when I come over?”

“I thought you were doing your hair something.”

Billy snorted a laugh at that. “No.” He jogged his knee, half terrified and half hopeful. He had that falling feeling. He’d decided the “falling in love” idea was very literal. When he got nervous about Steve he felt like he was being pushed off a cliff except that at the bottom a lot of times there was Steve’s comfy bed and that gorgeous body wrapped around his. But it was also scary as hell.

“Well!” Steve sat back in his seat, gazing at Billy, and looking way too relaxed and happy now. “I really feel cheated now. I want to meet nervous Billy.”

“Yeah, well, you’re lookin’ at him,” Billy said.

“Okay.” Steve nodded and he stroked his chin, making a show of



looking Billy over. "He's pretty cute."

"Shut the fuck up," Billy said, and now he smiled, shaking his head.

Steve leaned over and nudged Billy's shoulder with his forehead and rested there. "I'd rather get nervous Billy on time to see me," he said, and then Steve's hand was holding his. "You pissed me off because ya know...I thought you didn't give a shit. You acted like it."

"I give..." Billy shook his head. "So much shit. For you. Just..."

"You suck at showing it," Steve said.

"That's possible," Billy muttered.

"Okay," Steve said.

"Okay? That's it?"

"No, I mean, you gotta learn how to show it and be a good boyfriend because I'm a good boyfriend like I've had *practice* learning how to be a good boyfriend. I have a degree. I got this shit *down* now."

"Yeah, yeah." Billy grinned. "I know, I know. You're pretty decent at it, I guess."

"Oh, you guess?" Steve lifted his head, and he nuzzled Billy's chin with his nose and laid a soft kiss at his neck. "You guess, huh?"

"You're a *good* boyfriend."

"I'm a great boyfriend. You're so fucking spoiled."

"You're a *great* boyfriend! Okay!" Steve's arms were around him and Steve was reaching up to tip Billy's chin so they were looking at each other. "You're the best boyfriend," Billy said.

"That's more like it," Steve whispered, and kissed him, softly. His hand came up to rest on Billy's heart that pounded like a jackhammer beneath his thin t-shirt. "Hey there, nervous Billy."

"Ugh..."

Steve kissed him again, sweetly, cuddled up close to him in the Camaro. "I'm gonna teach you how to be a good boyfriend to me," Steve said. "And you're super lucky you have me for a tutor." He kissed Billy again and again and Billy was dizzy. "It's gonna be like *Karate Kid*," he said, curling a lock of Billy's hair around his finger. "Wax on," he whispered, kissing Billy's top lip. "Wax off..." He kissed Billy's bottom lip.

"Yes, Mr. Miyagi," Billy murmured. He kissed Steve's top lip. "Whatever you say." He kissed Steve's bottom lip.

"See? You're learning already."